



R. GERALD MCMURTRY

Director, The Lincoln National Life Foundation

Editor, Lincoln Lore

ADDRESSES ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Addresses on Lincoln for Special Groups

—————By—————

R. GERALD MCMURTRY

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THE LINCOLN CONTACTS OF R. GERALD McMURTRY

—————By—————
LOUIS A. WARREN

The stature of Abraham Lincoln grows year by year as new facts about him and his family are discovered and the magnitude of his task as chief executive of the nation becomes more clearly defined. Accepted as the personification of our American democracy the story of his life and works becomes an appropriate theme for any group of citizens at any season of the year. However, the speaker in this present day who proposes to address an audience on the sixteenth President of the United States must be well posted on all the facts of his life and able to open a new treasury of authentic information about him. Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, has many valuable qualifications which allow him to measure up to this exacting requirement. Possibly a somewhat detailed account of his accomplishments would be more appropriate in introducing him rather than a highly complimentary personal tribute which it would be possible to prepare with little effort.

The early life of Dr. McMurtry was spent in the environs of the Kentucky Lincolns. He was born in Elizabethtown, Hardin County where the parents of Abraham Lincoln first went to keeping house and where their first child, a daughter,

was born. Some of his relatives lived on the same farm on Knob Creek once in possession of the Lincolns when Abraham was a boy. Dr. McMurtry as a young man in the employment of the Kentucky State Highway Department assisted in resurveying the Knob Creek road over which Thomas Lincoln was a supervisor in 1816 then living on an adjacent farm. When Thomas Lincoln returned to Kentucky after the death of his first wife, he chose as a new mate the widow Johnston who lived at that time on the same lot in Elizabethtown where later on stood the boyhood home of Dr. McMurtry.

At Centre College, the Alma Mater of John T. Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner, Dr. McMurtry received the A.B. degree in 1929 and later in 1953 the college conferred the degree of Litt. D. upon him. Iowa Wesleyan College honored him with the LL.D. degree in 1946, and in 1962 Lincoln College conferred on him the D.H.L. degree. Two years after his graduation from Centre, where he had majored in history, he accepted the position as librarian of the Lincoln National Life Foundation. The four years which he spent as librarian of the Foundation from 1931 to 1935 might be called his apprenticeship in the field of Lincolniana. This interest he has persistently pursued all these years until he has become one of the nation's best informed men on the Lincoln subject. In 1937 he became the Director of the Department of Lincolniana at the Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate, Tennessee. Here he inaugurated an accredited course of study on Abraham Lin-

coln which he taught for twelve years. Other subjects in American history which he directed gave him an excellent background for the Lincoln period and also an opportunity to specialize on phases of the Civil War. He is presently a member of the board of trustees of Lincoln Memorial University.

Dr. McMurtry is a former editor of the *Lincoln Herald*, the only magazine devoted exclusively to Lincolnia, and widely circulated among Universities, public libraries and historical minded scholars. He has also contributed a great many Lincoln monographs to historical and popular magazines, and is the author of a number of books and pamphlets. Titles of some of the more important ones are noted chronologically on the last page of this pamphlet.

One of the organizations in which Dr. McMurtry has been especially active is the Civil War Round Table. He is a member of both the groups at New York and Chicago and has addressed other units of this organization throughout the country. He has also accompanied Civil War students on the famous battlefield tours. Dr. McMurtry is a member of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and his historical interests have reached back into the period represented by this group. He is a life member of the Filson Club of Louisville, Kentucky, and well informed on the history of that state.

One of the chief contributions which Dr. McMurtry has made to Lincolnia has been the gathering at Lincoln Memorial University what is said to be the largest collection of literature

pertaining to the Civil War period to be found in any college or institution of higher learning. Since becoming director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, he has continued his search for rare Lincoln items, increasing the scope and value of its collection.

Many honors, academic and otherwise, have come to Dr. McMurtry. President Dwight Eisenhower in 1957 appointed him to the nation's Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. The same year he was named by Governor Harold Handley to serve on the Indiana Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission. During 1958 he was awarded the Lincoln Diploma of Honor by Lincoln Memorial University and the Philadelphia Lincoln-Civil War Society Bronze Plaque. He was also elected to Honorary Membership in the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin.

The International Educational Exchange Service of the State Department selected Dr. McMurtry to lecture on Lincoln during the fall of 1959 in Southeastern Asia. His itinerary of three months included Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaya, Thailand, Philippine Islands and Honolulu, Hawaii.

Having been continuously engaged in the study of Abraham Lincoln and contemporary history for the past thirty-two years, the Foundation director is well qualified to speak with authority on almost any phase of the Lincoln saga. For pertinent biographical information concerning Dr. McMurtry consult *Who's Who in America*.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS PUBLISHED BY THE SPEAKER

- The Lincolns in Elizabethtown, Kentucky*
- The Different Editions of The "Debates of Lincoln and Douglas"*
- Lincoln Knew Shakespeare*
- The Influence of Riley's Narrative upon Abraham Lincoln*
- A New Portrait of Lincoln's Childhood Environment*
- The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana—1816*
- A Series of Monographs Concerning the Lincolns and Hardin County, Kentucky*
- The Department of Lincolniana of Lincoln Memorial University*
- Let's Talk of Lincoln*
- The Kentucky Lincolns on Mill Creek*
- The Lincoln Log Cabin Almanac*
- A Great Lincoln Collection*
- Ben Hardin Helm, "Rebel" Brother-in-law of Abraham Lincoln with a Biographical sketch of his Wife and an Account of the Todd Family in Kentucky*
- Confederate General Ben Hardin Helm: Kentucky Brother-in-law of Abraham Lincoln*
- Poet and President—Riley's Estimate of Lincoln*
- Lincoln and the Hutchinson Family Singers*
- Lincoln's Friend, Douglas*
- The Harlan-Lincoln Tradition at Iowa Wesleyan College*
- Why Collect Lincolniana?*
- Lincoln's Other Mary* (In collaboration with Olive Carruthers)
- Centre College, John Todd Stuart and Abraham Lincoln*
- Lincoln's Favorite Poets* (In collaboration with David J. Harkness)
- Beardless Portraits of Abraham Lincoln Painted from Life*
- A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and Its Surroundings* (written in 1869 by Samuel Haycraft) *Comments on the book with a section devoted to the Lincoln-Haycraft Correspondence of 1860.*



SPEAKING APPOINTMENTS

Information about Dr. McMurtry's speaking engagements may be obtained from any General Agent of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company or at the Home Office of the Company in Fort Wayne, Indiana.